

TEXT

Exodus 20:1-17

Exodus 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

BODY

Learn the first commandment by

- I. How It Is Addressed
  - A. "Thou" which is correctly in the singular, as is the original Hebrew
    1. the whole nation of Israel was standing there
    2. the whole race of man is addressed
    3. the whole church is here together
    4. yet God put this commandment to you, just you
  - B. This is one reason I am reading from the KJV for The Ten Commandments
- II. Its Place Among the First Four Commandments
  - A. First: the object of worship
  - B. Second: the means of worship
    1. means of worship...way and means...ordinances
  - C. Third: the manner of worship
  - D. Fourth: the time of worship
  - E. How exactly this is stated varies through the Puritan literature I have referenced. As far as I have seen, using these four terms just like this comes from Thomas Vincent:  
*Shorter Catechism Explained from Scripture, 1674*
- III. The Distinction Between the First and Second Commandments
  - A. First - that God only is to be worshiped, not any false gods, which often are worshiped by making idols; but anything worshiped instead of God is an idol, even if not a proper carved statue idol
  - B. Second - that God is not to be worshiped by use of any kind of statue, painting, etc.
  - C. The Roman Catholic position...
- IV. What Sin Most Obviously Is Forbidden
  - A. To worship anything else but God as He has revealed Himself
  - B. That is, to take any of what belongs exclusively to God the Creator, and give it to any creature

V. What Duty Most Obviously Is Required

- A. Remember this principle for understanding the Ten Commandments: when a sin is forbidden, the opposite virtue is required.
- B. Of course the main thing required is love toward God! But that is required by every commandment and all the commandments. The purpose of the commandments is to be more specific about what makes up that love.
- C. To worship God only, as He has revealed Himself; that is, to give to God all that He deserves as Creator from His creatures

VI. The Truth Upon Which It Is Based

- A. There is only one God
- B. Therefore only the one God is to be worshiped

VII. The Meaning of the Words “Before Me”

- A. “Before me” does not mean “ahead of me” as if it were okay with God for you to have other gods as long as he is your first or best god. No, it means before me the way food is before you on the table.
- B. Not “before men”
- C. Hebrews 4:12-16 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. 14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
  - 1. this commandment is living and powerful, because of the way the Holy Spirit uses it
    - a) it is sharp enough to cut all the way to your innermost parts
    - b) it discerns even the thoughts and intents of your heart
  - 2. No creature is hidden from God’s sight
    - a) you are naked to His eyes
    - b) you are open to His eyes
  - 3. The One God, whose word cuts open your innermost being, whose eyes see right through you, this is the one with whom you have to do; to whom you must give an account
  - 4. Your breaking of the first commandment, and of God’s entire law, is completely exposed to God, with whom you have to do
  - 5. Therefore there is no hope in hiding your sin from God

## CONCLUSION

But there is hope of all our sins being forgiven in Jesus Christ  
He was tempted in all , without sin!  
He is our great high priest, who makes the way for us into the presence of God  
Through Him we approach the throne of God; when we do, we find it a throne of grace where mercy is dispensed freely

The first commandment requires you to worship God only, as He has revealed Himself.  
The first commandment forbids you to worship anything else but God, as He has revealed Himself.  
All of your disobedience to this commandment is open to the eyes of God, who sees all the way to your heart.  
Hold fast to Jesus the Son of God, then, because He has obeyed this commandment for us, and so He is our way to come to God for mercy.  
Then, through Him, we strive to obey the first commandment, and our poor attempts are acceptable to God in Him.

Dillon - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Philippians 3:7-9  
Jeff ~~Stephen~~ - Scripture Reading - Psalm 119:49-56  
Jeremiah - Congregational Prayer  
Benediction - Revelation 22:14

Audrey - Prelude - "In Thy Wrath and Hot Displeasure"  
Rita - Trinity 151 "O Come, All Ye Faithful" - Alex lead  
Rita - Trinity 581 "To Thee, O Lord, I Fly" - Andrew lead  
Allison - Trinity 175 "Man of Sorrows"

Durham:

That it sheweth who is the right Object of worship, and directeth men thereto.  
That it regulateth mens internal worshipping of God, and calleth for that;  
whereas the second commandment supposeth both these, and directeth as to the *manner* of worshipping the true God in externals, and regulateth these.

It requireth the right knowledge of God; for there can be no true worship given to him, there can be no right thought or conception of him, or faith in him, till he be known: He must be known to be one God in essence, Deut 6:4 and three persons, 1 John 5:7...attributes...special works...as his works of creation, providence, redemption...the covenant of grace...the Mediator, and his offices.

It requireth from us a suitable acknowledging of God in all these properties...believed and trusted in

That the commandment requireth all these, and in the highest and most perfect degree.

We may look upon the breach of this commandment more largely, as God is any way wronged in that which is his due; or more strictly, as it relateth to that which is more properly idolatry.

Being more largely considered, it is broken two ways:

1. When what is proper and essential to God is denied to him in effect, or practically; as when he is not accounted eternal, omnipotent, one blessed God in three persons
2. ...when any thing unbecoming the holy majesty of God is attributed unto him; as, that he changeth...

(considering the breach of this commandment strictly) is by attributing that which is due to God...to creatures; as trusting in them, calling on them by prayer...believing that they have influence or power to guide the world, which some do attribute to stars, to the heavens, to fortune, to saints, to angels, yea, to devils; this is properly idolatry.

An idol is something excessively esteemed of, and idolatry is the transferring of God's due, outwardly or inwardly, to what is not God, whether we esteem it God or not.

There are five things that are incontrovertibly due to God, to wit,

1. estimation and honour above all
2. love with all the heart - 1 John 2:15; Col 3:5; Eph 5:5; 1 Sam 2:24-29 compared with Abraham, who withheld not his only son
3. confidence and trust - to wit, excessively
4. fear and reverence
5. service and obedience - you cannot serve two masters; Gal 1:10; what men are most excessively taken up with, and most careful to fulfil and accomplish; what it is for which

they will take most pains that they may attain; what getteth most of their time and labour; what...overaweth them most, so that they cannot resist it, tho' it thrust by duties to God

the world

the belly Philippians 3:19 ... gluttons, drunkards

a man's self...honour...applause...his own will, opinion

when it indisposeth for these [worship of God in praying, reading, hearing, etc] so that, when we are praying or hearing, the heart is carried away after creatures, and the mind is taken up with some other thing than God; as Ezek 33:3

Is 30:22

Luke 14:8

1 Cor 10:5-15

More generally, it is broken three ways, as hath been said already:

1st, By derogating from God that which is his due; so all contempt of him, disobedience to him, wronging his infinite attributes, as if he were not Omnipotent, Omniscient, Infinite, etc, denying of his providence in less or more, are breaches of this commandment. Thus, he is wronged, when he getteth not every way that which is his due.

2dly, By attributing to God what is not consistent with his absolute perfection, purity and holiness; as, that he doth or can do wrong, change, not keep his promises, or not guide the world wisely; that he hath any bodily shape, or may be comprehended.

3dly, When, what is due to God, as faith, hope, love, fear, etc. is given to creatures, whether to idols literally, or to men, to saints, angels, ordinances (ast he sacraments), stars, herbs, gold, physicians, etc. when too much weight is laid on them, or any thing, not agreeing to them, is ascribed to them; by which witchcraft, charming, covetousness, judicial astrology, etc. are reprov'd, as drawing the hearts of men away from the living God.

Thomas Vincent

<https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/vincent/The%20Shorter%20Catechism%20Explained%20-%20Thomas%20Vincent.pdf>